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ABSTRACT

The data presented in this report provide insight into employer involvement at 29 Exemplary In-School Demonstration Projects. Twenty of these programs actively sought work experiences for their youth participants, and an additional six programs contained work experience components that did not necessitate employer identification/participation. The data were collected by field observers of the Youthwork National Policy Study through informal interviews with program directors and job developers during January and February 1980. Contained within this report are findings and recommendations relevant to five topics: (1) how program personnel initiated contact with employers, (2) incentives/disincentives to employer participation, (3) how employers were involved in the programs, (4) distinctions between public and private sector employment, and (5) what program personnel would do differently if starting their programs over. The findings presented in this report reflect one step in the process of better understanding the role employers play in federally sponsored youth programs. (KC)

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employer involvement: a study of public and private sector linkages to youth programs

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OCCASIONAL PAPER #2

YOUTHWORK NATIONAL POLICY STUDY
Cornell University
Ithaca, New York
June 1980

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OVERVIEW

EMPLOYER INVOLVEMENT: A STUDY OF PUBLIC AND PRIVATE SECTOR LINKAGES TO YOUTH PROGRAMS

This Occasional Paper is one in a continuing series to be prepared by the Youthwork National Policy Study on selected aspects of the Exemplary In-School Demonstration Projects. These projects are being conducted under the auspices of Title IV, Part A of the Youth Employment and Demonstration Act (YEDPA) of 1977. The projects are a set of local programs which represent an effort by the U.S. Department of Labor to explore improved means of providing employment and training opportunities for young people, particularly those from low-income and minority families. The Exemplary In-School Demonstration Projects are administered through Youthwork, Inc., an intermediary, non-profit corporation.

EMPLOYER INVOLVEMENT is a report devoted to an examination of both public and private sector participation in these projects. The data for this report were collected at 29 projects during January and February of 1980. Furthermore, these projects represent all four of the programmatic focus areas established by Youthwork, Inc.: private sector involvement; youth operated initiatives; academic credit for work experience; and career information and awareness. Interviews with program directors, operators, job coordinators and the observations of field observers have all been incorporated into this report.

Additional copies of this report may be obtained by writing in care of the above address.

June 1980

a collaborative project of Youthwork, Inc. and New York State College of Human Ecology, a statutory college of the state university

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A number of individuals have directly contributed to this current report. First are the on-site observers of the Youthwork National Policy Study who conducted the local data collection. A list of their names is located on the next page. Special mention and thanks must be given to the local project personnel who have given of their time for this effort. To preserve anonymity, their names can not be included here. However, those who have participated will know who they are and perhaps they will recognize themselves in the materials which follow.

Also, I extend my appreciation to Ray C. Rist for his review and comments of earlier drafts of this report and to Karen Adams who has devoted many hours to the preparation of this manuscript. For the contents and accuracy of this report I take full responsibility.

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June 1980

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ACRONYMS

ETA	Employment and Training Administration
CETA	Comprehensive Employment and Training Act
DOL	Department of Labor
NAB	National Alliance of Businessmen
OJT	On-the-Job Training
YEDPA	Youth Employment and Demonstration Projects Act
YETP	Youth Employment and Training Projects
YNPS	Youthwork National Policy Study

INTRODUCTION

The United States government has initiated numerous programs aimed at addressing youth unemployment problems. The most recent of these endeavors is the Youth Employment and Demonstration Projects Act (YEDPA). Its predecessors include, among others, the Neighborhood Youth Corps, the Job Corps, and the Vocational Education Act.

Private industry has also attempted to address the need for youth employment through individual company programs and, perhaps most notably, via the establishment, during the mid-1960's, of the National Alliance of Businessmen. The extent to which these and other efforts have been used to address youth unemployment is suggested by Mangum and Walsh.

> The creation of job opportunities outside the normal processes of the labor market, either by direct public job creation or by subsidizing employment in private firms and institutions or public agencies has been one of the major strategies of attempts to alleviate youth unemployment. In 1974, for example, 70 percent of all employment and training program enrollees under 22, and 90 percent under 19 years of age were enrolled in work experience programs. Since the passage of CETA, and now with YEDPA, subsidized employment for youth has been expanded both absolutely and relatively (1978:52).

Unfortunately, for all our efforts to date, very little research exists on the viability of various approaches to the youth employment problem. With this being the general situation, it is not surprising to discover that even less is known about how best to involve employers in federally funded youth programs. Mangum and Walsh (1978:53) note that, "Evaluative material on youth participation in public service employment and subsidized private employment is sparse." In the foreword to a more recent review of the literature in the field, focusing primarily on private-sector participation in federal youth programs, Ungerer wrote:

> The principal conclusion [of this report] is that this whole field of private-sector involvement with youth transition programs, while rich in anecdotal examples, is very poorly documented and researched in any formal sense. The result is that, in spite of substantial experimentation, we really know little about what motivates and sustains private-sector involvement and what outcomes can be expected from such participation (National Manpower Institute, 1980:viii).

The outlook for the near future may not be nearly so bleak. Numerous studies have been initiated to more systematically investigate currently unresolved questions. Entire programmatic areas have been developed with a primary focus on knowledge development. One such instance is the Exemplary In-School Demonstration Projects, supported through Youth Employment and Training Projects (YETP) discretionary funds. As with other YEDPA programs, it is incumbent upon those individuals operating the Exemplary Projects to broaden our knowledge base. The first general principle of the YEDPA Planning Charter states:

> Knowledge Development is a primary aim of the new youth programs. At every decision-making level, an effort must be made to try out promising ideas, to support on-going innovation and to assess performance as rigorously as possible. Resources should be concentrated and structured so that the underlying ideas can be given a reasonable test. Hypotheses and questions should be determined at the outset, with an evaluation methodology built in (1977:5).

On This Report

This current report is devoted to presentation of data collected via a special sub-study of the on-going Youthwork National Policy Study (YNPS). More specifically, the purpose of this sub-study was to examine how both public and private sector employers were involved in these programs. The data reported here were collected by YNPS field observers at 29 programs located in 18 states. Furthermore, the data were collected at projects reflecting all four of the Exemplary In-School Demonstration Project focus areas: private sector involvement, youth operated initiatives, academic credit for work experience, and career information and awareness.

The issues reviewed on the following pages reflect research and policy interests of both the U.S. Department of Labor and Youthwork, Inc. In particular these data address the following broad research area as specified in the U.S. Department of Labor's A Knowledge Development Plan for Youth Initiatives Fiscal 1979.

> What approaches and procedures can be used to involve the private sector in employment and training efforts and to increase the placement of the participants in private sector jobs? How effective are these approaches in accessing new jobs and providing better career tracks for youth? Are they preferable to public sector approaches (Office of Youth Programs, 1978:4)?

Further, Youthwork, Inc. has requested information which addresses the following questions:

> How are private sector employees recruited?
>
> What are the various forms of private sector involvement?
>
> What incentives do private sector employers have for participating in the program?
>
> What are the disincentives which discourage private sector involvement? (Youthwork National Policy Study Phase II Contract, 1979.)

These, then, were the guiding issues and questions for this sub-study to investigate both private and public sector involvement in the Exemplary Projects. The findings presented in this report reflect one step in the process of better understanding the role employers play in federally sponsored youth programs. As such they begin to address the many knowledge gaps which have been noted in the literature.

Methodology

The Youthwork National Policy Study has been investigating various policy relevant questions at a number of Exemplary In-School Demonstration Projects since September 1978. To accomplish the data collection, individuals were hired to act as on-site observers for YNPS.

The primary data collection methods used have been those associated with ethnographic research: observation, document review and interviewing. To help modify these methods to better fit the need for timeliness, which policy research demands, specific areas of investigation were identified for the field observers.

> A significant departure from traditional ethnographic research was instigated with this present study. Rather than send the observers into the field and wait for the "emergent issues" to become apparent, time considerations as well as specific policy questions of concern to the Congress, the Department of Labor, and to Youthwork, Inc. necessitated the pre-definition of areas of investigation (Rist et al., 1980).

The focusing of data collection has been accomplished through the development of guidelines which were forwarded to field observers. For this present report a brief outline of questions to be asked of program personnel, most often the project director and job coordinator, were provided to field observers (See Appendix).

Field observers at 33 sites were asked to address the issues through both the above mentioned interviews and their own knowledge of the program. Responses were received for 29 sites (88%). The non-responses were due to health problems of one field observer and the arrival of the research request during the termination of observations at three sites. Exclusion of these last three sites yields a response rate by field observers for this particular investigation of 97% (29 of 30 sites).

The Programmatic Focus Areas

The Exemplary In-School Demonstration Projects were funded as a means of testing new and innovative youth employment programs. Further, these programs were to:

> Learn more about in-school programs and their effectiveness and to promote cooperation between the education and training and employment systems (Youthwork, Inc., 1978:2).

The original Exemplary Projects were subdivided into four focus areas, each representing a different approach to the problems of youth unemployment. On the following pages the emphasis of each of these focus areas as well as descriptions of the 29 responding programs are briefly presented.

Expanded Private Sector Involvement Programs: This focus was identified to investigate how private sector employers could be encouraged to increase their involvement in youth programs. It was hoped that programs linking CETA and schools with the private sector would provide insights into the establishment and conduct of such programs and provide potentially long term benefits to the youth participants.

> When jobs are with private employers, they contribute to important real life experiences in the labor market. Also, such jobs often last beyond the life of a project and can represent a direct "next rung" opportunity for participants (U.S. Department of Labor, ETA, Office of Youth Programs, 1978:18).

The decision to focus on this approach to in-school programs was both timely and appropriate. It was timely in that not only is the development of linkages between employment, training and education services a major goal of YEDPA (DOL, 1978b:3), but also because there is an expressed need to involve the private sector directly in addressing what is an issue of critical national concern. As but one instance, a series of workshops conducted shortly after passage of YEDPA in 1977 identified involvement of this sector in youth programs as an area for serious investigation. It was noted then that:

> In each of the five workshops, concern was expressed regarding the limitations of the use of the private sector for work experiences because this sector can and should make key contributions to these programs (DOL, 1978:7).

The appropriateness of this focus area choice comes from the knowledge that over eighty percent of all jobs exist within the private sector business community (Graham, 1978a:1; Pressman, 1978:2). Additionally, youth represent one group which is affected by the persistence and expansion of structural unemployment in our society (Robison, 1978:9). To address this problem Robison states:

> Government programs to train and provide jobs for the hard-to-employ will continue to play an important role in national manpower policy. Its main emphasis is on the need for substantially greater private sector involvement in efforts to aid such groups both directly and in partnership with government programs (Robison, 1978:9).

Data from five private sector programs are included in this report. A brief sketch of some components of each of these programs includes:

Site 1: Students explore careers and can make appointments with Employer Based Counselors to further discuss specific careers. Over 250 employer volunteers cooperate with the program. A number of youth also are given work experiences in the private sector.

Site 2: A rural program providing classroom training in job readiness skills. After completion of that program phase youth participate in vocational exploration in private and public sector jobs.

Site 3: Youth canvass the local community around their school (program located in a major city) to identify potential work sites as well as employers interested in participating in the program in other ways (e.g., as guest lecturers, provide business tours). Students spend one afternoon per week in a classroom situation learning about various careers and job readiness skills. Finally youth are placed in one vocational exploration within the private sector.

Site 4: This program provides basic skills development, job preparation skills and vocational exposure in the private sector. The program's purpose is to provide these experiences as a means of helping prepare youth to make decisions about employment and further education after high school.

Site 5: An alternative school providing academic basic skills, survival skills, job orientation classes and vocational exploration. Both public and private sector employers are utilized. Additionally, a "community partner" (mentorship) component is being provided students.

Job Creation Through Youth-Operated Programs: Job creation through youth operated projects was selected as a primary focus for Youthwork, Inc., because the area raised important issues in national policy toward youth. Youth are normally the consumers of employment training services and are not involved in the decision-making areas. As consumers only, youth have been denied important experiences and skills which would be gained from being actively involved from the planning stage through the creation,

implementation, and completion of the project effort. The Department of Labor and Youthwork, Inc. (DOL Application Guidelines--Exemplary Programs, 1978) have considered this involvement of youth the primary distinction between exemplary programs chosen for this area and programs supported under the other focal areas (private sector, career guidance and counseling, and academic credit).

> Job creation through youth operated projects has been selected as a primary area of focus because it raises crucial issues in national policy toward youth. Usually, young people are the "objects" of programs serving principally as spectators and consumers of goods and services. This passive role excludes young people from important experiences and skills. To be competent is to be the subject of an activity not the object. The measure of competence is what a person can do. Youth operated projects are a way to experiment with approaches that develop competence by actively involving the enrollee in the task of creating socially meaningful and economically gainful employment (DOL Application Guidelines--Exemplary Programs, 1978a).

The five reporting programs include:

Site 1: A school sponsored program offering training in agricultural service production, child development and care, construction skills, and business office skills. Supplemental education classes in basic skills are available to students. There are no work experiences with public or private sector employers.

Site 2: A school sponsored program with student operated components including: a graphic arts studio, a student food service, a performing arts group, a consumer action service, and a school maintenance and repair shop. At present no youth are employed in public or private sector worksites.

Site 3: Students receive job preparation training, survival skills and specific training in solar energy principles. Work experiences are provided through the operating agency.

Site 4: An in-school work evaluation and career exploration program that pre-evaluates students for vocational training and potential employment. No direct work experience component exists at this program.

Site 5: Youth operated projects in both services and goods which were designed and are operated by youth. No actual work experiences exist outside the program components.

Academic Credit for Work Experience Programs: The academic credit projects are designed to help economically disadvantaged youth make the transition to the work world by providing youth with work exploration and placement in the public and private job sector. As an incentive to participate, to help them economically, and to stimulate real work experiences, they receive minimum wage payment for their job placements. Additionally, the participating youth are awarded academic credit for their participation. This second dimension is an inducement for the target population--dropouts and potential dropouts--to return to or remain in school. As a national policy concern, providing academic credit for work experience was chosen as primary focus area because:

> Some students are so discouraged by past schooling experiences that they find it difficult to learn skills through traditional academic routes. Providing credit for work experience can be the key to encourage some of these youth to continue their education. In general, it is believed that work-education linkages can improve both the work and learning experiences. Although a number of schools in the country have programs that award credit for work, few programs successfully interrelate the education and work experiences. Schools need to take advantage of the fact that many jobs offer opportunities to stimulate learning (DOL Application Guidelines, Exemplary Programs, 1978a:14-15).

Program characteristics of the nine programs included in this report are:

Site 1: A program providing on the premises work experiences pertaining to the use of natural resources. Youth participate on small work crews with a crew leader/mentor. Job-seeking skills and job referral service are available to youth.

Site 2: Career counseling, job-readiness skills and work site experiences are provided to rural youth. Both public and private sector employers provide jobs for participating youth.

Site 3: Youth participate in career guidance, basic academic skills and work experiences in the private sector.

Site 4: Located in an alternative school, this program provides career information, guidance, job-seeking skills and work experiences in both the public and private sectors.

Site 5: This program is located in traditional and alternative schools and provides long-term internships which students can directly relate to their school work. While private sector placements had been planned, only public sector have been used at present.

Site 6: An alternative school providing academic instruction and work experience in the public sector.

Site 7: A work-study program involving job training at the workplace, related school instruction, and basic academic skills instruction. Work placements are currently concentrated in the public sector with limited private sector involvement.

Site 8: A program combining career exploration, occupational skill development and work experiences. Employers from both the public and private sectors provide jobs.

Site 9: An alternative education center provides specific timing focus on energy-related careers. An Advisory Committee develops work placements, provides training and secures academic credit. Private sector placements are emphasized.

Career Awareness Programs: A shared goal of the programs in this focus area is to improve the transition of youth from school to work by providing youth with career information, job-seeking skills, and counseling. Graham (1978) noted that career guidance was a pressing issue in youth employment and that much still needed to be learned concerning how best to attract youth to available resources.

The National Task Force on Youth Employment Policy, a group of representatives of the professional educational associations meeting in spring 1978, identified career guidance and counseling as the most pressing of six issues concerning youth employment. Of 14 subissues in guidance, jurisdiction for counseling, and the training of counselors ranked highest. This suggests the following reasoning:

> -Students are not using educational opportunities wisely in preparing themselves for jobs. They make poor use of these opportunities because they are not getting enough information about jobs and adequate counsel on how to prepare for them.
>
> -Improved counselor certification and counselor training will do much to solve the problem. Counselors should be trained to use career information and to give greater emphasis to counseling for employability.

Availability of information and better counsel, important as they are, however, may not be enough. Teenagers most in need of direction seem to have the greatest difficulty in accepting help. The problem, then, is attracting youth to guidance services, which ought to be easier to do if more was known about what works for the teenage poor. (1978:1)

Brief program descriptions of ten career awareness programs include:

Site 1: A placement center provides career information and guidance, skills training, employability assessments, job development and referral. Public and private sector work placements are identified.

Site 2: Ninth grade students focus on career awareness and decision-making skills. Actual work experiments are provided for tenth through twelfth grade students.

Site 3: Career education, peer counseling, on-the-job training in the private sector and vocational exploration are provided to participating youth.

Site 4: Located on an Indian reservation this program provides career awareness and public sector work experiences to eligible youth.

Site 5: High school and community college youth are provided career information, guidance and job-seeking skills. Public sector work experiences have been emphasized.

Site 6: An alternative school program providing career awareness and guidance but no work experience.

Site 7: Development of a speakers bureau for local high schools and work experience in the area of their studies for community college youth.

Site 8: This program utilizes an extended peer counseling approach to assist youth as they work toward their occupational/educational objective.

Site 9: Career exploration, job-preparation skills and public or private sector work experiences are provided for rural youth.

Site 10: Program components include: training for youth in specially designed school-to-work transition skills modules, development of personal career plans and a work experience in a public or private work site. A second emphasis is to expand private sector involvement with the city's school districts.

Caveats

Although mentioned throughout the text, several cautions and clarifications have been brought together at this point to reiterate and reinforce their importance to the reader's understanding of the nature of this report.

1. The term "employer(s)" is used throughout this report. Unless public or private sector employers are specifically identified, one may assume that the term is being used to include both employment sectors.

2. The term "work experience" as used in this report refers to work experience in general, including both vocational exploration and on-the-job training. Where appropriate a specific form of training is identified.

3. Data pertaining to both private and public sector employers are discussed within this report following the assumption that if one wishes to weigh the merits of private sector involvement over public sector involvement in youth programs, then both should be reviewed. Because several of the reporting programs that have a work experience phase have used both employment sectors, an examination of these contrasting sectors is in order.

4. Due to the varying nature of the reporting programs, many of the questions contained on the interview questionnaire (Appendix) were not applicable to specific programs. As such, responses from all 29 programs exist for very few of the following sections.

5. Only five of the 29 reporting programs were specifically designed to focus on private sector involvement. The employer related data from many of the remaining programs reflect secondary and tertiary program components and not the major emphases of these programs.

FINDINGS

The findings to be reported here have been organized into five areas: 1) how employers were contacted; 2) incentives/disincentives to employer involvement; 3) the nature of employer involvement; 4) the distinctions between the use of public and private sector placements; and 5) what program personnel would do differently if starting the program over. The first three categories represent a progression through which these programs have gone during the past two years. The latter two categories build upon the preceding ones, thereby allowing insight into possible directions for the involvement of employers in future programs.

The programmatic focus areas and their respective projects were reviewed to suggest the diversity of the endeavors represented in this report. The data pertinent to employer involvement suggest that, on this issue, these programs have a great deal in common. Therefore, to eliminate extensive repetition, no attempt has been made to discuss employer involvement within each programmatic focus area. However, to substantiate the claim of similarity of employer involvement among these diverse programs, quotations are identified by programmatic focus area.

I. Contacting Employers

The first step toward employer participation is establishing contact. Commonly, some form of direct program/employer contact initiated this process. Individuals at all 29 programs used one or more of the following methods: 1) face-to-face contact, 2) presentations before local organizations; and 3) letters and/or telephone calls. In addition the following contact approaches were used on occasion to locate and contact potential employers: 1) lists, such as Chamber of Commerce, Yellow Pages, and NAB, for identification and appropriate follow-up; 2) word of mouth; 3) personal contacts/friends; 4) advisory councils; and 5) program youth themselves serving as contacts.

Clearly, face-to-face contact with employers was essential. Whether programs began with this method or not, they almost all ended up using it. A private sector program's job developer explained to the field observer the importance of this contact approach:

> He emphasized the importance of direct one-to-one contact with employers, and that it was harder for employers to say no to an appeal to community commitment to youth in a face-to-face contact as opposed to a contact over the telephone or in a letter.

A program analyst for an academic credit site corroborated this situation:

> I would go out and get three or four sites a day. Of course, t[illegible] directions said to get on the phone and call people, but I think that makes it too easy for people to say no. I was successful because I know all of the people in the community.

The need to pursue direct personal contact was further suggested by an attempt to initiate employer interest [illegible] letters of introduction. The field observer at a private sector program noted the following:

> A list of employers was compiled from the Yellow Pages of the county phone book. These employers were sent introductory letters which contained descriptions of the program, and asked if they would like to participate. They were told that if they were interested in having a student at their place of employment, they should contact the project. The response was underwhelming--not one employer called.

Combining the direct approach with additional contact methods enhanced the ability of a program to acquire employer involvement. This appeared particularly true if one hired individuals familiar with the local business community and/or established advisory councils. In the former instance both rural and urban program officials attested to the value of knowing people within the business community. Field observers from two academic credit programs provided the following descriptions. In each situation the important factor was the indigenous nature of the program personnel responsible for employer recruitment. From an urban academic credit site the field observer related:

> She told me that one of the reasons she was given her position was because of her long history of participation in community organizations. Many of the agencies she contacts are familiar with her personally. "I have been a part of the poverty business for more than ten years. Most of the people I hang around with are working for grass roots organizations."

A rural academic program's analyst discussed his longstanding familiarity with the community and then went on to praise the program's secretary for her assistance:

> After contacting an initial group of employers and getting their commitment, he waited until students had particular needs outside this group to make new contacts. "And then the secretary began to help me. She has personal friends that are doctors, people like that, so she would make the contacts for me." All of the staff credit the secretary for developing many of the professional placements in the project.

The use of advisory councils to assist in the identification of work sites as well as a vehicle for dissemination of program information

appeared to have been quite limited. Personnel at only five programs discussed this use of advisory councils. In one situation, a career awareness program, the program operator noted that, to date, he had been able to "achieve without the committee that which I want to do", and therefore little effort has been directed toward such a council.

In contrast, three programs found these councils to be extremely useful. At one private sector program this was found to be true, even though the council was established several months after the program began. The field observer noted:

> In last year's program, employers associated with one of the schools via the Advisory Council were instrumental in obtaining employment slots for approximately 50 percent of the students. In the other school, over 95 percent of the worksites were developed by the students during the course of the "outreach" work.

A final case suggests a situation which program personnel can ill afford to let occur. At this academic credit program a potentially useful advisory council was allowed to disband due to neglect by program personnel. The field observer related:

> I should add that another component built into the original proposal which was supposed to assist in private sector placement was the Work Education Council. It would have several committees to work closely with the project, one of those being private sector employment. This committee met a few times but faded out with no personal commitments or very much interest shown from community people. The project director did not really push for it, so several months into the project it died a natural death.

The importance of this quote is not that it depicts a failure to utilize the council to acquire worksites, but rather the failure of program personnel to follow up a linkage which they had initiated. Unfortunately, it was not just advisory councils which went unattended. For instance, at one private sector site the field observer noted that

contact with employers via organizations was attempted but little follow-up by program personnel resulted in no further attempts to use this approach. In direct contrast, pursuit of linkages can yield substantial program gain as suggested by the experiences of a second private sector program which used the resources of NAB to help identify over 250 employers interested in acting as counselors for the program.

These situations suggest a lack of time and/or personnel to effectively carry out all of the program's components. Interim Report #1 (1979:31) of the YNPS noted the difficulty encountered by program personnel who not only must complete daily program duties but also must identify work placements. One means to address these problems was identified at an academic credit program where "two staff members start work two weeks before the beginning of school, and spend the time looking for job possibilities for the students".

One final means of acquiring employer involvement has proven successful for two consecutive years. This innovative approach used the program's youth in an "outreach effort". Employers were contacted directly by youth canvassing the community surrounding their schools for potential work sites. These youth described the program to employers and then filled out a form indicating the employers interest in the program. This interest level ranged from a willingness to act as a guest speaker, to giving worksite tours, to having a youth work at his/her place of business.

The success of this approach can be substantiated. During the first year's outreach (1978-1979) approximately 140 youth identified over 700 interested employers. During the 1979-1980 school year approximately 60 youth identified 148 interested employers. This was accomplished in the first nine days of the outreach process (25-30 days total outreach time).

Furthermore, this approach was so successful that a group of eleventh grade students attempted during the 1979-1980 school year to identify for themselves, unsubsidized work placements. These large pools of potential work sites have allowed this program to place students in employment situations which reflect more closely their career interests.

II. Incentives/Disincentives to Employer Involvement

A fundamental question is simply, "What can a program offer employers as an incentive to participate?" Resolution of this issue is imperative if youth employment programs are to succeed. This section examines the incentives and disincentives which fostered employer/program linkages. Particular emphasis has been placed upon financial and other incentives used to acquire actual work placements. It is in this area that the greatest costs are incurred by employers. Further, there is a need to acquire a better understanding of what can be done to foster the creation of work experiences for youth. The discussion which follows is subdivided into observations about financial incentives, other incentives, and disincentives.

Financial Incentives: For the programs which placed youth with employers: full subsidation was used by 14 programs; partial subsidization was used by one program; and five programs did not provide this information.[1] The reliance upon full subsidization appeared well founded. Program personnel from nine sites identified subsidization of youth wages as being a major incentive to employers. One private sector program's operator suggested

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[1] An additional six programs provided work experiences within the program but without employer involvement. Three programs did not place youth in work experiences.

that the wage subsidy allowed businessmen the opportunity to extend their community involvement without threat to their profits. In fact the operator noted that some employers agreed to participate only after they were informed that the youth's wages would be covered by the program. It was the view of program personnel at another private sector site that without the wage subsidy local employers could not have afforded to become involved.

> Students wages are fully subsidized by the program and this has been a major incentive to employers. Many employers have stated that they would not be able to have another person in their facility if wages were not subsidized. Most employers like the method of subsidy, since not only does it relieve them of financial burden, but also it relieves them of extensive paperwork.

The decrease in participation that non-subsidization would generate was suggested by one rural academic credit operator when he noted that "possibly 20 percent of the employers might have participated in the program if they themselves had to pay".

To avoid portraying employer involvement as being linked solely to financial incentives, it should be noted that there have been instances of youth leaving programs because they were offered unsubsidized positions with various employers. In fact, one private sector program, which did not operate during the summer of 1979, found that about one-half of its students were retained by their employers during this period without subsidization. The field observer related:

> About one-half of last years students (approximately 70) were offered jobs by the employers during the summer, and without subsidy. Several of the students (January 1980) are still working after school for these employers.

The field observer went on to identify three factors which influenced employers to accept unsubsidized youth:

1) The need for employees, at minimum wage, where the employers have some assurance of the student's interest and ability. Association with a program such as this one gave employers this type of assurance.

2) Many of the employers heard of the school programs aimed at providing students with work experience. In general, the businessmen favored this educational approach and wanted to support it.

3) Favorable impressions made by youths in initial contacts and interviews.

The use of the targeted jobs tax credit represented a different approach to the issue of financial incentives.[1] Job coordinators at one private sector program suggested the use of this incentive as an alternative to on-the-job training contracts for some of the program's youth (this being a program component separate from the fully subsidized vocational exploration work experiences.) The field observer related the job coordinator's reasons for this enthusiasm about this incentive and one major concern about the adequacy of the incentive as it applied to youth:

> In reference to incentives to private sector employers, the conversation turned to the use of the OJT contracts which was not successful this year. The coordinator gave the following account. The coordinator felt obligated to tell the potential employer that when we use the OJT contract, then their books could be open for audit by the federal government. Well, that just automatically turned a lot of potential employers off. Whereas, with this tax incentive there is not that type of federal involvement in the books, just a couple of simple forms, and it reduces the wage expense by 50 percent for the first year up to $6,000, and it really should work. The coordinator pointed out a pitfall in the tax incentive law, and that is that it left out 14 and 15 year olds. He feels that these are really the kids who need the most help, because they are difficult to place in the first place.

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[1]The targeted jobs tax credit allows for a credit of 50% of the first $6,000 in wages paid to eligible workers in their first year of employment (25% of $6,000 during second year). Further information is available through IRS offices.

Other Incentives: A number of non-financial incentives were identified by program personnel as having further fostered employer participation. These incentives included 1) a sense of community obligation; 2) the businessmen's knowledge and trust of the job coordinator; 3) good past experiences with other programs; 4) pre-screening of students by the program to determine their potential for success in specific work experiences--a matching process between youth and job; 5) flexibility of scheduling--at an alternative school the youth could work any time during the day; and 6) a growing positive program reputation within the community.

The first of these incentives, a sense of commitment to the community, was described in a number of ways including community responsibility, professional obligation and even a desire to help take "care of your own". One private sector job developer identified this as a "strong commitment to the future of the youth in the community". A field observer at a rural private sector program noted:

> Some employers are concerned about community obligations. For instance, one of the questions frequently asked of the job developers is where these kids come from. The employers are much more receptive to helping high school students from their own communities. Quite a few employers have mentioned that their children, when they were teenagers, had difficulty obtaining jobs and they support this program because of their empathy for youth.

From an academic credit program the field observer described the following:

> The site analyst said that, "In our community I believe it is a desire to help that motivates them to participate". The operator felt that there was not so much a "community obligation" at work, but a "professional obligation". As an example, he commented that local doctors felt that someone had helped them at one time and they wanted to return that.

Program personnel used the various incentives to foster employer receptivity to their programs. As with employer contact, success hinged

upon an active commitment by program personnel. A good example of this can be shown by examining comments made by program personnel regarding their program's reputation. At one career awareness program the commitment of program personnel was identified as an incentive to employer participation. The field observer related:

> Last year's (1978-1979) success had tremendously influenced and helped this year's (1979-1980) project and the things that have contributed to this in the eyes of these people were: the training and the followup; that there is always a contact person--if the employer has a problem.

At a second academic credit program, the field observer learned that development of a program specific reputation fostered employer interest:

> Has the program's reputation helped or hindered? The project operator felt that in the beginning, when it was a generalized CETA reputation, it hurt. But now that they had a specific programmatic reputation, it helped. "Now that we have proven ourselves, the employers are coming to us."

Finally the field observer at a youth-operated program connected the program's reputation to the needs of employers and the successful employment of program graduates:

> Some members of the community, particularly farmers and construction companies, have expressed an interest in the participants of the program as a sources of their future employees. Therefore, it appears that the reputation of the project is in good standing. Also some of the graduated students who were participants in the program are now employed in jobs for which they were trained.

Disincentives: Numerous reasons concerning why individual employers refuse to participate were identified through the conversations with program officials. Most common was simply that the employer had no need for additional help. Small businesses, in particular, fell into this category. These businessmen could not justify taking on the additional help--even if it was free labor--if it meant that current employees would have had less to do.

Program personnel from two of five private sector sites noted that the age of the youth and the labor laws were factors impacting on private sector employer involvement. One program director noted that it was not refusal on the part of employers that inhibited job placement, but that there were "so many places we can not put students". This has been particularly true for programs which attempted to place 14 and 15 year olds in work experience positions.

Misconceptions concerning the youth by employers at four programs was another factor with which programs had to contend. These misunderstandings ranged from a general "distrust" of high school youth to the stereotypical ideas about programs of this nature.

> The program director stated that the main barrier to acquiring job sites has been an initial rejection of involvement with the youth program based on stereotypical ideas. Some employers have had contact previously with youth programs and have had negative experiences. Some of these employers have complained of the time required in supervising students and of not trusting youth in general. However, several of these sites, which have been persuaded to take on students on trial basis and have had some positive experiences with youths from the project, are now willing to take on what they consider to be "high risk kids".

Additional disincentives encountered can be divided into two areas: those specifically program oriented and those more generic in nature. In the first category fall such factors as: 1) some jobs requiring sophisticated skills--specific training of any nature before placement is not a feature of any of these programs; 2) inexperience of job developers and/or poor presentation of the program's purposes by youth to employers--this reflects the value of staff familiar with both the program and the community and of better preparation of youth prior to identifying worksites; and 3) the coordination of cooperating agencies in the acquisition of worksites.

Issues impacting on these programs but not to any great extent within their control included: 1) the current economic condition which is not conducive to small business expansion--one reason why employers are pleased with the full subsidy approach of several programs; 2) a reluctance to become involved in federal programs which may lead to auditing of their books and simply the forms and "red tape" that appear generally assumed to go hand-in-hand with federal programs--another area avoided via full subsidization of youth; 3) CETA prime sponsors who have refused to allow subsidization of private sector placements--this suggests that a clearer understanding of relevant legislation was needed; 4) unions; and 5) public sector employer fears of state aid cuts. These last two factors, noted at one private sector program, are further explained by the program director:

> We haven't been able to get into places that have unions because of the union rules. And, there is also that incident I told you about with the nursing home, where they were afraid that if they took our students, they would receive a cut in state aid.

III. The Nature of Employer Involvement

The involvement of employers took one of the following forms: 1) to provide guest lectures; 2) to provide tours of their businesses; 3) to provide supportive services (e.g., materials about their business); 4) to participate on advisory councils; and most importantly, 5) to provide work experiences. The information provided by program personnel suggested that their programs were generally successful in working toward their program's goals regarding employer involvement. This "success" may have resulted from a highly organized program administration or smooth program implementation to simply the sheer determination by program personnel to see the program succeed.

As the first four forms of employer involvement are self-explanatory this section will focus on the problems which have been identified in acquiring work experiences. Programs in all four focus areas found it necessary to use public sector placements to a greater extent than had been anticipated. One reason for this was identified by a career awareness program operator:

> In terms of finding job opportunities for youth we have been doing fairly well up until the last month or so. We had anticipated finding much more employment during the Christmas holidays, but we just found there were not the jobs available we hoped there would be. We are particularly finding, within the last month or so, the employment and job openings have been the least we have seen in a long time. As you probably know there are a number of individuals laid off and at present there are not a number of jobs open. There still seems to be a lot of interest from employers. They like the idea of being able to go to the schools and find students in their community or in the area where the business is located to get students, especially those who have an interest in their type of employment opportunity. But right now there are just not the jobs available, and that has caused a problem in some of our programs in helping youth get jobs.

Another factor precipitating greater public sector involvement for a private sector program was the type of work available. One field observer stated:

> Almost all placements are within the private sector. The few public sector placements have resulted from students' requests to gain certain types of experiences, i.e., library aide, teacher aide, which are not available in private sector employment.

This finding suggests that not all youth necessarily want careers in the private sector. As such there should be alternatives available for these youth.

Initial failures at one private sector site were attributed to inadequate contact with employers due to lack of staff and adequate time to maintain linkages. This was remedied through

the addition of a full time job developer and development of a regular schedule of contact with participating employers. Similar problems were recorded by a field observer at a second private sector program.

> To assess the success or failure of obtaining private sector participation by this program, one must take a look at the changes that have occurred over the year the program has been in operation. Initially the program had a great deal of difficulty in finding job placements. Some of the difficulty encountered can be accounted for by the lack of experience of the job developers, the absence of procedures to keep track of contact with employers and their responses, and the absence of leadership and supervision by the previous director. Personnel changes, the institution of procedures to record the results of contacts with employers, and the experience which time has brought to the staff have all contributed to the participation of more private sector employers.

Late program startup and the poor state of the economy were viewed by yet another private sector program director when he commented:

> In the private sector we have not had the success we had anticipated. Last year, I believe it was due to the late start that we had. This year we had time to get some involvement, but perhaps the economy--this is just not a good time to be hunting up jobs. I know my husband's company is laying off people, and also the coordinators have not had the coordinating time this year that they really need. In terms of goal we really don't have a figure. There isn't anything in the proposal. We know we are supposed to be concentrating on private sector, and we try to do that. The public sector involvement is more than we originally anticipated. That is because we had to turn to the public sector to take up the slack from the private sector.

An academic credit program, which originally planned to have 75 percent private sector, 25 percent public sector placements, found it necessary to reverse these percentages when support from the business community virtually disappeared. Reasons for this occurrence were noted by the field observer and included a "misunderstanding" of the types of students the program would be placing and a distrust of CETA programs

in general. The experience of this program, as described by the field observer, suggests the need for a clear understanding between program operators and employers regarding the intent and clientele of youth programs.

> When the project became operationalized, a job development specialist began visiting possible private sector employers. It became apparent very quickly that there would be a problem with the private sector placements. Those individuals who had initially (at the early meeting) indicated support just were not available although the job development specialist put some considerable effort into pursuing those avenues. When these employers were pushed, they responded that they had not realized that the students that the project wanted to place in their businesses did not have skills. I was also told by the project director (who had attended that original meeting because at that time she was the CETA youth program coordinator and instrumental in writing the proposal) that the students who had been asked to attend that original meeting for the Youthwork people were students from the school. But they happened to be student council people and in fact, a "different sort" of student than the "kind" that the project was planning to serve. This was mentioned to me by the project director as another reason why, when it came to producing, these private sector employers did not come through.

Two final inhibitors to the use of private sector employers were the refusal of CETA prime sponsors to allow placements in this sector and the delay of reimbursement of youth wages to private sector employers. Both situations reflected an uncertainty as to the interpretation of CETA regulations concerning the subsidization of employment in the private sector. At the two programs which have experienced problems of this nature, resolution was achieved via almost exclusive use of public sector work placements.

Late program start-up and understaffing were additional factors with which programs have had to contend. The former precluded ample time to identify potential employers. The latter resulted in a variety of program modifications--or perhaps less politely, deletions. Two situations suggest what can occur when staff are expected to do more

than is reasonable. A field observer at a career awareness program noted the following:

> During the first year of operation (1978-79), the vocational teacher/counselor had two scheduled class periods a day. That arrangement allowed him time to develop his program, arrange field trips, job experiences, and job observations. He had arranged with several businesses to have students work part-time on a temporary basis and without pay to have a work experience and learn about that particular business. During the school year (1979-80), however, none of the above has continued. There are two reasons for this. The first is a matter of time. In an effort to keep down class size, the vocational teacher now has a class each period. The main purpose of the class is career awareness and job acquisition skills. No provision is made for individual placement or supervision. Field trips also are not possible because of continuous classes as well as transportation problems. The second reason is the assumption and feeling that YET (another local youth program) can handle the actual job placement and supervision for interested students. There is, however, no referral system between the alternative school and YET. Also, there seems to be little if any communication between the two programs despite the fact that they are housed in the same building. The vocational teacher did not know if any of his students were being served by YET. He did agree it would be helpful if he knew so that he might supplement the students' work experience in the classroom and individualize the instruction for the particular needs of the student.

The second instance of understaffing occurred where career specialists within the schools were expected to operate a career center and attend all the employer guest lectures held in the school. The career specialists felt their time was better spent in the career center providing "concrete career information". The field observer noted that one way these specialists resolved their mandatory attendance at lectures was by scheduling as few lectures as possible.

This section has reviewed data which suggests the difficulties programs have encountered in involving employers in general and private sector employers in particular. Overall, however, it must be emphasized that these programs have met or come close to meeting their projected

number of placements of youth in work experiences. This has often necessitated shifting placement from the private employment sector to the public sector.

One particular innovation, which may be difficult to implement in most situations but should not go unmentioned, was the use of flexible student work hours. One private sector program operated in an alternative school setting. The setting allowed youth to take either morning or afternoon classes which in turn allowed some students to work for employers at varying times during the day--including morning hours. Program officials found this approach helpful in acquiring private sector placements. The competitition between programs and even individual youth looking for after-school jobs predictably makes afternoons a difficult time to place youth in jobs. Therefore a system which utilizes "off peak" employment times may carry certain competitive advantages.

IV. The Distinction Between Public and Private Sector Placement

The preceeding section reported a greater than anticipated reliance by programs on the use of public sector work placements. To begin to address the question of whether student placement in one employment sector was preferable to the other, program personnel were asked to make distinctions between these employment sectors. Data concerning this issue were received from eight sites (three private sector, three career awareness, two academic credit). Each of these sites placed youth in both employment sectors. The remaining programs did not respond most often because programs either did not place youth in work experiences or only placed in one sector and therefore had no basis for comparison. The opinions/experiences related below are varied

and at times contradictory, but at the same time provide an enlightening view of this issue.

Personnel from four programs (two private sector, two career awareness) suggested that public sector employers took an interest in helping students. One program coordinator noted:

> Students receive more supervision and there seems to be more opportunity for job training and skill development in the public sector jobs. Public sector employees seem more interested in helping our students and not just getting work out of them. Private sector employers and supervisors are not quite as patient. They seem more concerned with the profit motive and do not have the student's interest at heart.

One field observer suggested that this perception may be in part due to the nature of public sector jobs--their being more person/service oriented than private sector jobs.

In contrast, data from two programs (one private sector, one academic credit) suggest that public sector employers were more likely to accept behaviors which would not be tolerated in the private sector. A job coordinator related:

> Well, public sector is non-profit, and in the public sector the student is, for all practical purposes, working for free. There is no pressure in the public sector to perform. Whereas, in the private sector it is a profit motive; it is sink or swim. I mean in the private sector you get fired if you are no good, I mean you are gone. That is not necessarily true in the public sector. Public sector can afford to keep their less productive employees because they are free. Whereas, private sector can not afford to keep them.

The field observer added:

> The public sector is seen as a place where one can "get away with" certain behaviors. Therefore certain kids who could not make it in the private sector are placed in public sector jobs. I see a hierarchy that a student can move through. First he must show the correct attitude in job orientation class. Then he is placed in the public sector. If he shows that he is a dependable and responsible worker, he is placed in the private sector.

The greater availability of public sector jobs was one incentive to use this sector. As one director noted, these employers "always need help in some area". However, another program director was concerned that "supervisors in the bureaucracy are too accustomed to programs like this--the students are from just one more program, like many before them", the implication being that public sector employers may not be as concerned with the work experience the student receives.

Some clear distinctions between these employment sectors have emerged. They include: 1) less permanence and chance for advancement in the public sector; 2) public salaries are not as high; 3) greater turnover of personnel in the public sector; and 4) different types of jobs exist between these employment sectors. This last point was identified at a private sector program. It was noted that use of public sector sites should not be excluded as there are some youth who have career interests which can only be found in this employment sector.

An issue which surfaced at six of eight sites pertained to how youth were used at their work placements. This issue was also the one which generated the greatest amount of contradictory data. One job developer suggested that there was less possibility of a youth in a public sector placement to be "used". The field observer related:

> One job developer feels that the public sector offers a greater opportunity to students without the temptation to "use" the students to do just any job. She feels that the public sector is more committed to offering training for youth.

These sentiments echo the first quote contained in this section. In contrast, program staff at a site which had to rely almost exclusively on public sector placements were of the belief that this type of work was "make work" and that the private sector reflected the "real world".

Staff at another program attributed the difference between programs to the profit motive of the private sector.

> Both individuals feel that the public and private placements differ, but in subtle ways. They both feel that students receive more substantial work assignments in the private sector. They think the profit motive has something to do with this--a private businessperson is more likely to put the student to good use than someone in a bureaucracy.

V. Starting Over: Strategies for Employer Involvement

Many "person years" of experience with these youth employment programs now exist. A final area of investigation delved into a key aspect of these programs--their implementation. Simply put, program personnel were asked, "If you had to do it over, how would you change your approach to employer involvement?" Field observers were also encouraged to provide their insights and opinions as they often had been associated with their respective program for longer period than the current staff.

Recurring throughout the preceding sections have been such factors as insufficient staff, not enough time to complete tasks, and unanticipated problems in acquiring private sector work placements. These issues were raised again in response to the above question and remedies were offered by personnel representing 18 of the 29 programs.

An increase in the amount of pre-program planning/preparation time was suggested by representatives of seven programs. During this time the following could be accomplished: 1) plan the program, recruit and train staff; 2) define program objectives, so that program personnel know what they are; 3) develop the administrative structure; 4) identify the needs of students and employers; and 5) allow public and private sector

employers to become involved in the conceptual and developmental stages of the program. For job developers this means time to identify potential job sites. Acquisition of one job slot can, in some instances, take weeks. To initiate this process after the program has begun simply increases the difficulty and possible failure. Associated with program planning is the need to staff programs sufficiently, so that individuals have adequate time to do their jobs.

To increase the involvement of the private sector was of concern to program personnel. Suggested modifications at individual programs included: initiate contact with this sector as it had not been approached; gain a better understanding of CETA regulations regarding work experiences in this sector; and attempt to alleviate some of the local misconceptions about the program.

More importantly, personnel from six programs representing all four programmatic focus areas suggested that advisory councils be used and that greater publicity efforts be undertaken. In the three instances reported, advisory councils were effective in linking the program to employers. Further they would provide a medium through which employers can help guide programs to better meet employer needs. One field observer noted that these councils need to be formed early in the program and have a clear understanding of their function.

Increased publicity through word of mouth, organizations and the media were identified as factors to be considered. One director noted that in this public relations work it would be important to, "Put the publicity any place that a private sector person might run across it".

A third area of concern noted at six programs, was the preparation of the youth. This included both better equipping of the youth to meet

employer expectations and a fostering of greater individual capabilities.

One private sector program director related:

> "I would like to do things differently, in that I would like kids to develop their own jobs. I was impressed with what I heard about the other youth work program which did that, and the sheer number of jobs the kids developed. It is not just that I think the kids could develop more jobs than we have been able to, but I think we do too much for them, in a lot of ways. We teach them in the classroom what an interview is going to be like, but from the few interviews I have seen, they are really not much. It seems like we get these students jobs, whereas, we should be helping them more to learn how they go about getting their own jobs. It takes a lot of guts to walk up to somebody and ask them for a job. It takes skills to describe what you want, describe who you are, and it also takes a level of self-confidence that I would like to see us help these kids to develop. If we have the kids go out and contact the employers, it would reinforce what we have taught them in the classroom about the skills necessary to interact with employers.

An individual associated with a career awareness program noted:

> One thing that I think we have to be aware of is that often times when you start a program that deals with employers, programmers go out and they try to get all the employers to give their job openings and they forget they have to spend as much time preparing the student for employment. Sometimes we fail to realize that job placement means that we are working with students too. I have seen a lot of programs, where they have gone out, got job openings, come back, and found out that their students were not prepared and have gone out and do not get these jobs because they were not adequately prepared.

Personnel at one career awareness program suggested that if a program does not provide actual work experiences, it should be linked with other programs that do; and if it does not provide specific training, it should be linked with local training programs.

> I would concentrate on setting up linkages with private and public training facilities and vocational training programs so our students would be more qualified to meet the needs of employers contacting us for help. As mentioned earlier, our biggest problem now is finding students who meet the needs stipulated by employers.

SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The data presented in this report provide insight into employer involvement at 29 Exemplary In-School Demonstration Projects. Twenty of these programs actively sought work experiences for their youth participants. An additional six programs contained work experience components which did not necessitate employer identification/participation. All 29 programs utilized employers in less demanding ways (e.g., guest speakers, tours).

The data were collected by field observers of the Youthwork National Policy Study through informal interviews with program directors and job developers. Guidelines for these interviews were provided by the YNPS staff at Cornell University. All interview data were collected during January and February 1980.

Contained within this report are findings relevant to five topics: 1) how program personnel initiated contact with employers; 2) incentives/disincentives to employer participation; 3) how employers were involved in the programs; 4) distinctions between public and private sector employment; and 5) what program personnel would do differently if starting their programs over. The sections which follow briefly summarize the findings and provide recommendations.

I. Contacting Employers

When contact between a program and an employer took place, one of the following methods was most often used: 1) face-to-face contact;

2) presentations before local organizations; and/or 3) letters and/or telephone calls. Individual sites utilized additional methods including: 1) identification of employers through existing lists combined with a follow-up; 2) word of mouth; 3) through personal contacts/friends; 4) through the use of advisory councils; and 5) using program youth to locate potential employer participants.

Several factors become evident when reviewing the data. First, the most direct approach possible when contacting employers is preferable. Program personnel felt that face-to-face contact reduced the ability of employers to refuse to participate. Second, the familiarity of staff with the community's resources was beneficial in the identification of employers and worksites. This process was enhanced when staff had been part of the community for several years. Third, a pre-planning phase, allowing time at the outset of a program for the identification of employers interested in the program would facilitate the program's employment related phase and prevent or lessen the overloading of staff during other stages of the program. Fourth, the use of program youth at one site was a highly successful method of locating potential employers. During the first year (1978-1979) of this program's outreach (about 30 days in duration), approximately 140 youth identified over 700 businessmen interested in participating in the program. Without even considering the additional rejections associated with this effort, its magnitude far exceeds what one or two job developers could accomplish in an equal time period. Finally, advisory councils were shown at three of four sites from which information was provided to be helpful in the acquisition of employer participation. The fourth site's advisory

council was allowed to fade away due to neglect by program personnel. This, in conjunction with other instances of contacts initiated but not pursued suggests that greater attention be paid to the mechanisms developed for program linkage to the community.

Recommendations

1. Although a variety of approaches was tried, the most successful in acquiring employer involvement was through direct face-to-face contact.
2. The hiring of staff familiar with the community and its employers enhances a program's ability to acquire a sufficient number of work-sites. It may also provide greater access to more specialized placements.
3. A pre-program planning phase should be instituted at future programs. This period could be used to better prepare program components, allow those individuals responsible for employer involvement some lead time, and prevent or lessen the overloading of staff during other program phases.
4. The first year's experience in which over 700 interested businessmen were identified by approximately 140 youth, suggests that this approach be seriously considered. Two obvious advantages to this approach are its reduction of the workload placed on staff and the increased number of potential worksites which may be contacted.
5. An appropriate program component would be the formation of an Advisory Council. Its functions would include, but not be limited to: dissemination of program information, identification of employers who can provide services to the program, and provision of program guidance

concerning employer expectations of employees. Further, it would be beneficial if this council was organized early in the program (preferably prior to) so that it may assist in program implementation.

6. It is imperative that any linkages with the community, be they via Advisory Councils or individual encounters, be followed up. Failure to do so can decrease the ability of a program to acquire community support.

II. Incentives/Disincentives to Employer Involvement

Data presented in the National Manpower Institute's report on the involvement of the private sector suggest that, as with other employer program related issues, we know very little about the factors which entice employer participation. Financial incentives, tax credits, community obligation all can be used to encourage this process. But, there are also factors which mediate against employer involvement--red tape, current economic conditions, poor presentation of the program. Data from the Exemplary Projects identify all of these as impacting on the program/employer linkage.

Financial incentives appeared to be necessary. Fourteen of fifteen programs which provided data on the extent of subsidization used a full wage subsidy approach (one site used a partial subsidy). Program personnel noted that full subsidization of youth wages relieved employers of the financial burden, reduced employer paperwork, and allowed participation at a time when the economy was not conducive to doing so.

A second financial incentive was the use of the Targeted Jobs Tax Credit. While only one program reported using it, and even then to a limited extent, it does provide an alternative approach to wage subsidy. Given the apparent need for subsidization, program operators should consider this method as an alternative funding approach.

Other factors influencing employer participation ranged from community obligation to familiarity with program personnel to the program's reputation. The only truly innovative incentive mentioned allowed youth to work at any time during the day. Acquisition of work experiences at "off peak" periods (e.g., mornings) enhanced the program's ability to locate work sites.

Numerous reasons were mentioned by employers who chose not to become involved in these programs. Most common was simply that they did not need additional help at present. Other factors included: 1) the age of the youth; 2) federal government reporting requirements; 3) the current economic condition; and 4) labor laws.

Recommendations

1. Program personnel repeatedly indicated that without subsidies very few employers would have participated. This may, in part, be due to the current economic conditions. Whatever the reason, financial incentives, at present, appear to be a necessary program component.
2. All programs placing youth within the public sector fully subsidized their wages. This is probably the only way public sector employers would accept youth, unless they volunteered.

3. While half and full wage subsidization have been used for private sector placements, the latter has greater advantages for employers. First, of course, is the additional help at no cost. Also important is that the full subsidy approach allows an employer to become involved in the program and at the same time, not have to leave his books open for possible government auditing. Governmental interference in one's business is a concern of employers.
4. The sense among employer of community "obligation" or "commitment" and the idea that they can have an impact on the development of the students' work skills are two factors which program personnel can use to help "sell" the program.
5. The reputation of the program within the community can act as either an incentive or disincentive to potential employers. It is, therefore, imperative that every effort be made to present the program well and for program personnel to follow up on program contacts/commitments within the community.
6. One alternative school program found that its flexible scheduling, allowing students to work at any time during the day, has enhanced its ability to acquire worksites. If a program's design is flexibile enough to allow for this form of scheduling, it should be seriously considered.
7. The age of youth participants is a factor which must be considered when developing a youth program. For example, it may be more appropriate to develop a career awareness type program if the youth to be served are 14 and 15 year olds--an age group for whom it is quite difficult to find work experiences due to labor laws.

III. The Nature of Employer Involvement

Employer participation encompassed a range of activities which included providing: 1) guest lectures; 2) tours of their businesses; 3) supportive services (e.g., materials about their business); 4) participation on advisory councils; and 5) work experiences. This report focused on the various experiences programs had in acquiring work experiences.

Program personnel within all four programmatic focus areas found that they had to rely on public sector work experiences more than had been originally proposed. Three reasons for this were: 1) the current economic conditions; 2) a need to provide a greater range of work experiences than could be found in one employment sector (an attempt to meet youths' career interests), and 3) confusion about the CETA regulations concerning subsidization within the private sector.

Program implementation impacted upon the ability of personnel to acquire employer involvement. Late program start-up, understaffing, and inadequate time to maintain linkages, all were factors to be accepted and remedied. Resolution of these problems ranged from acquiring extra staff to deletion/reduction of program components.

Recommendations

1. A greater than anticipated reliance on public sector employers has occurred in these programs. One reason for this has been the refusal of CETA prime sponsors to pay for private sector placements. A clearer understanding of CETA regulations by both program personnel and CETA personnel would alleviate these misunderstandings. Subsidation in the private sector is allowed within certain guidelines (See Federal Register, Vol. 44, No. 65, April 3, 1979).

2. Late program start-up, i.e., start-up after the beginning of the school year (which occurred at virtually all of these programs), and under-staffing are two factors which need to be circumvented if at all possible. Each contributes to a program's implementation problem: time available vs. tasks to accomplish. The end result is an insufficient level of attention to program components. If there is a concern for employer involvement in the program, then sufficient time and staff need to exist to pursue this program aspect.

IV. The Distinctions Between Public and Private Sector Placements

The federal government's growing interest in the involvement of private sector employers in youth programs has precipitated the need to examine closely the distinctions between public and private sector placements. Given that a large majority of all jobs are located within the private sector, this focus may be quite appropriate. However, for the student who will spend only a few weeks in a work experience does the employment sector actually make a difference? Unfortunately, the literature on this issue is non-existent. The National Manpower Institute recently completed what may well be the most comprehensive report on the involvement of the private sector. Their assessment of the public/private sector issue stated:

> But is there any advantage to youth of obtaining work experience or training in the private, as opposed to the public sector? The literature simply does not say. To our knowledge, there exists not a single evaluation that addresses this topic (1980:31).

An appropriate starting place in the investigation of the public vs. private placements is the identification of differences which exist. In fact, the National Manpower Institute suggested that intuitively the

the private sector would pay more, have greater opportunity for permanence and provide wider advancement possibilities. Further it was noted that in many federal transition to work programs:

> Younger teenagers often are placed in public or non-profit agencies where it is hoped they will learn good work habits and attitudes in an atmosphere less stressful than the private sector, with its dedication to profit and productivity. When and if these youngsters become job ready, they then are referred to private employers (1980:32-33).

Twenty of the programs included in this study have actively sought work experiences in either or both of these employment sectors. Program personnel from eight of these sites (all of which involved both sectors) provided data relevant to distinctions between these employment sectors. On the whole, a clear preference for one sector or the other cannot be made. Each had its proponents and detractors. However, the opinions expressed suggest that much of what the National Manpower Institute proposed was substantiated at the local level.

The most clear distinctions included: 1) less permanence and chance for advancement in the public sector; 2) public salaries are not as high; 3) greater turnover of personnel in the public sector; and 4) different types of jobs exist in these employment sectors. This last factor may be particularly relevant for individuals contemplating the implementation of a youth program. As one does not assume that all youth are going to want the same type of careers, neither should one assume that one form of work experience (public or private) is appropriate for all youth. The program design should not dictate the types of work placements youth may have. Rather, it should be flexible enough to allow individual interests to be met.

The public sector employers were depicted by personnel from four programs as being more interested in helping students. It was suggested that this may be in part due to public sector jobs being more person/service oriented. Further, this sector was believed to be more likely to put up with behaviors not accepted by the private sector, be more likely to offer employment, and less likely to "use" (i.e., take advantage of) students. On the other hand, the private sector was depicted as less patient, more profit motivated, more likely to put the student to good use, and provide "real world" training vs. public sector "make work". It would appear, then, that any decision regarding the clear advantage of using one sector over the other needs considerably more investigation.

Interestingly, there does appear to be a fear (or at least a deep concern) that poor performance by program youth placed in the private sector may result in loss of private sector involvement. Phrases such as "putting up with behaviors", "less patient", and "real world vs. make work", suggest this to be the situation. The National Manpower Institute suggested it in the quote cited earlier as does an almost identical program specific quotation located in the findings section (p. 30). Is it actually that private sector employers are more difficult to satisfy or do these perceptions stem simply from the lack of experience in creating the necessary linkages? While this study's narrow examination of public/private differences does not suggest an answer, it does further document the need for extensive investigation to take place.

Recommendations

1. There are varying level of worksite supervision. Whether one sector tends to be more conscientious in this regard is debatable. Most

likely the level of supervision depends on the specific employer. However, this does suggest that program personnel need to closely monitor the work experiences of youth. How students are "used" by employers also needs to be closely monitored. Work experiences should emphasize a quality learning experience for the youth and not a material gain for employers.

2. The limitations should be recognized in any decision to focus a program exclusively on either the public sector or the private sector. Each can provide different types of work experiences. The career interests of the youth being served should help dictate the identification of worksites.

V. Starting Over; Strategies for Employer Involvement

The preceding four sections have identified several factors which program personnel would incorporate into their programs were they to begin again. To review, they have recommended: better maintenance of linkages; start-up to coincide with the school year; better planning of time vs. tasks; and attention to staffing levels. As can be seen these factors are all intrinsic to the implementation of these programs.

Three areas of particular interest were the need for a pre-planning period, an increase in private sector involvement, and more attention to the preparation given youth. Pre-planning periods would allow program personnel needed time to lay the groundwork for conduct of the program as well as address some of the above issues, e.g., start-up, time vs. tasks. In increasing private sector involvement the emphasis was placed upon the establishment of advisory councils and an incrased use of

publicity. In the few instances reported, advisory councils were quite instrumental in orchestrating the program/employer linkage. The use of increased publicity, via as many means as possible, was suggested as a method of enticing further private sector employer participation.

Finally, program personnel suggested that we not lose sight of those for whom these programs are being operated--the youth participants. Preparation of youth to meet employer expectations is only one factor to be addressed. More important is the fostering of individual capabilities. When the students do leave the security of the program and the school, they hopefully will possess both the experience and confidence to be able to move into the world of work.

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APPENDIX

GUIDELINES FOR DATA COLLECTION: EMPLOYER INVOLVEMENT

I. Descriptive/Statistical Data

Most of this information should be readily available through records maintained by the program operator.

- -the current (1/80) number of youth enrolled
- -the number of youth eligible for placement in a work experience
- -the number of youth in work experiences
- -the number of youth in public sector jobs and private sector jobs
- -the salary paid youth while at work
- -the total number of employment sites (subdivide by private and public sector)
- -a listing of these sites noting the following characteristics
  - a) ownership (e.g. locally owned, chain, industry, etc.)
  - b) services rendered (e.g. goods, services, etc.)
  - c) approximate number of employees (optional) ranges 0-20, 21-50, 51-100, 100 or more
  - d) how long the employer has been involved with the current Youthwork program
- -other relevant characteristics you might feel would help provide a picture of the employers in the program.

If any of the above data is not readily available through the program operator's office do not spend time collecting it by yourself. While it does provide a bit of background when discussing private/public sector involvement, the more important focus of this data collection is contained in the following section.

II. Interview Questions

Please stay with the questions listed below adding others only if time allows. Also for some questions there is a need to differentiate between private and public sector employers. For example you could ask question one twice--once for each employment sector. A few questions may be inappropriate and therefore may be deleted.

1. What is the nature of private/public sector involvement in your program (e.g. give tours or lectures, provide jobs, other)?

2. What has been the degree of success in meeting original goals for incorporation of the private/public sector in this program? What were the goals? How can one account for this success/failure?

3. What are the incentives to private/public employers that have facilitated their participation?

   a) Financial Incentives: What strategy has been used to pay for the youths' wages (e.g. full subsidy by project; partial subsidy by project part by employer; employer pays full wages, other)? How has this approach worked out? How have problems been negotiated? Have there been instances where employers have refused to take the subsidy in favor of paying for youth themselves? How many (approximately)? Why? Would employers have accepted youth without subsidization? Why?

b) Other Incentives: Has there been expressed by employers a feeling of community obligation? Has the program's reputation helped/hindered obtaining work experiences? Why? Other reasons?

4. How were employers contacted? Did advisory councils or other groups (e.g. NAB, Chamber of Commerce) help locate worksites? Explain.

5. What was the extent of youth training or preparation for their work experiences? Were youth given interview and application completion training? Did youth have to use these techniques when being placed in work experiences? Why or why not? (Approximate percentage using/not using learned skills?) Were youth trained ahead of time for the job they were placed in? Are youth receiving training while at the work site? Who supervised this process? Is there an emphasis to train youth for a future job (transferable skills) or are some/many of the work experiences primarily used to expose youth to a work situation or simply make work positions?

6. What type of feedback has the project received from employers? How has this feedback been incorporated into the project?

7. What disincentives have inhibited acquisition of work sites? How can/have these problems be/been addressed?

8. How do private sector placements differ from public sector placements? Are there advantages to one over the other? In what ways? Which employment sector do youth appear to prefer? Why?

9. What is the amount of time youth spend in a work experience during the program? (Note total time/week in program; time/week in work experience; total time student can be in program.) Do youth have multiple work experiences or remain at one site? For those with multiple experiences approximately how long per work experience?

10. How do program operators define vocational exploration (VEP)?
How do program operators define on-the-job training (OJT)?
How do program operators differentiate between the two and how is each utilized? (if appropriate)

11. If you had to start the project over, how would you approach private/public sector involvement differently? That is, what alternative strategies would you use that would be inducive to encouraging private/public sector involvement?

12. For observers: What is your impression of the success/failures encountered by the project when incorporating private and public employers? Why? Explain.

Other information readily available which may help clarify the involvement of private and public employers would be helpful. Remember that you are spending only two or three days collecting this information and that our interest is in responses from 1) the program director, 2) the CETA liaison, and 3) the project job developer, 4) your own impressions.

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